

Ecclesiastical Judges Complaints Procedure

1. Chancellors and Deputy Chancellors in the Church of England hold judicial office, as does the Dean of Arches and Auditor. By reason of the independence of the judiciary, any complaint concerning them must relate to misconduct in the performance of their office, and not to the substance of the decision made (including case management decisions) in court proceedings. By way of example, matters of misconduct might include rude or bullying behaviour, or inordinate delay in the conduct of proceedings.
2. Any complaint about an ecclesiastical judge shall be submitted in writing to the Vicar-General of the Province concerned at the address below.¹ It must be sent within three months of the matter complained of, although the Vicars-General may entertain a complaint made after that time in exceptional circumstances.
3. The complaint shall contain:
 - the name of the complainant and their contact details (including their postal address and email address);
 - the name of the person against whom the complaint is made;
 - the date of the matter complained about;
 - the nature of the proceedings involved;
 - full details of the complaint (ie what the person said or did or did not do that it is alleged amounts to misconduct);
 - details of the exceptional circumstances relied on if the complaint is outside the three month time period.
4. If the complaint on its face could not amount to misconduct, the Vicar-General shall dismiss it and shall notify the complainant and the person complained about accordingly, giving reasons.
5. If the complaint could amount to misconduct, the Vicars-General (or if either is conflicted, a duly appointed substitute who shall be a senior chancellor from the province nominated by the Dean)² shall investigate the complaint in such manner as they deem appropriate and in accordance with the principles of natural justice.
6. At the conclusion of the investigation, the Vicars-General may:
 - (a) dismiss the complaint;
 - (b) require that an apology be made;
 - (c) give advice to the ecclesiastical judge concerned;
 - (d) rebuke the ecclesiastical judge; or
 - (e) refer the matter to the relevant bishop or archbishop to consider whether to invoke the provisions of section 3(3) and 11(3) of the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and Care of Churches Measure 2018 (which provisions provide for removal from office).

¹ In the event that the person complained about happens also to be the Vicar-General of the Province or is otherwise conflicted, then the matter shall be transferred for initial scrutiny by the Vicar-General of the other Province.

² In the event that the person complained about is the Dean, then the substitute shall be nominated by the other Vicar-General.

7. The outcome shall be communicated to the complainant and the person complained about and made public in such manner as the Vicars-General may direct.

The Province of Canterbury comprises the following dioceses:

Bath & Wells	Europe	Lincoln	Southwark
Birmingham	Ely	London	St Albans
Bristol	Exeter	Norwich	St Edmundsbury
Canterbury	Gloucester	Oxford	Truro
Chelmsford	Guildford	Peterborough	Winchester
Chichester	Hereford	Portsmouth	Worcester
Coventry	Leicester	Rochester	
Derby	Lichfield	Salisbury	

The address for service is:

The Vicar-General, Canterbury,
Provincial Registry,
Minerva House,
5 Montague Close,
London.
SE1 9BB

The Province of York comprises the following dioceses:

Blackburn	Manchester
Carlisle	Newcastle
Chester	Sheffield
Durham	Sodor & Man
Leeds	Southwell & Nottingham
Liverpool	York

The address for service is:

The Vicar-General, York,
Provincial Registry,
Stamford House,
Piccadilly,
York.
YO1 9PP